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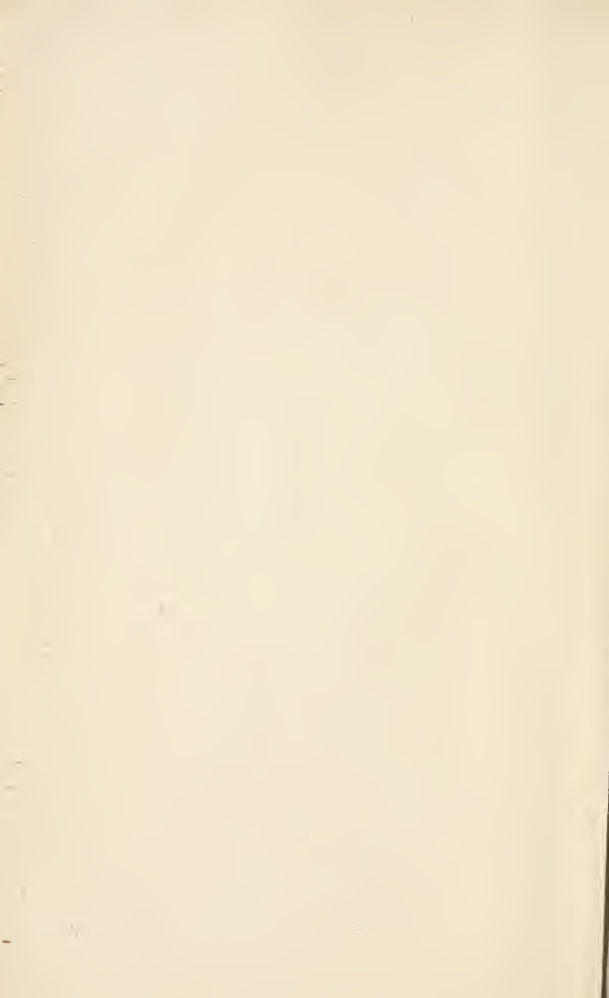


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MEMOIR  
OF  
REV. JAMES C. BRYANT,

LATE MISSIONARY OF AM. B. C. F. MISSIONS TO SOUTH AFRICA.

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BY REV. THOMAS SAVAGE,  
BEDFORD, N. H.

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*Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and  
approved by the Committee of Publication.*

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# MEMOIR.

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## CHAPTER I.

BIRTH.—EARLY HARDSHIPS.—CONVERSION.

EXAMPLES of successful perseverance amid obstacles and discouragements, are worthy of special notice. When from obscure beginnings and humble poverty a youth, rising above every disadvantage, consecrates himself to God, and with much effort and self-denial, becomes qualified for extensive usefulness, some brief record of such a career may be beneficial to the living, as a stimulus to Christian enterprise and moral heroism.

Such was the course of Rev. James C. Bryant, late missionary in South

Africa, which is presented to the reader in the following memoir.

The great object at which he aimed, he was beginning to accomplish; but disease came upon him in the midst of his opening labors, and after a few years of missionary service, he died among the sable descendants of Ham, for whose instruction and salvation he left a beloved pastoral charge, and with his companion, bid adieu to home, country, and friends, to go to far distant regions.

Mr. B. was born in Easton, Mass., April 8th, 1812. In his infancy, his parents removed to New Hampshire, and settled in New Boston, Hillsborough Co., where they lived in a state of indigence, but respected for their habits of industry and probity.

Finding it difficult to maintain a

young and rising family, some of the children were taken by neighbors as soon as they could be of any use in the household.

It so happened, that not far from them, within the limits of Goffstown, there lived a colored family, consisting of a man and his wife, who owned a small farm, and were thrifty and estimable people, the wife being an honored and consistent member of the Congregational church.

In the poor boy they took an interest, and when about twelve years old, Bryant became a member of the family of Cato Walker. They fed and clothed him, and felt for him a tenderness which could hardly be exceeded by parents, and had not been equalled by their white neighbors. In return, the lonely lad labored with Cato on the farm,

and assisted his wife in domestic duties, who says of him, "Oh, he was like a minister. If any of the boys used bad language in his presence, or conducted improperly, he was sure to reprove them."

In the year 1826, there occurred in Goffstown a revival of religion. "Every Sabbath morning," in the language of the pastor, "the lad might be seen by the side of Cato, wending his way to the Sanctuary."

Such a providence it was that brought James Bryant to the Sabbath school. The revival advanced, and the lines of deep thought could be traced on the brow of the strange lad, and his minister sought him out, learned his history, and thus recorded his impressions:

"I first saw him in the Sabbath school, then I met him in the house;

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I saw him patiently toiling and cheerfully, in the field; I conversed with him in the road, and no time can efface from my memory, the pleasant image of his modest, thoughtful countenance as he was wont to hang over the gallery in his intentness on the preaching. When public worship was over, without mingling with the frivolous of his own age, or manifesting mortified pride at associating with his colored protectors, he started with elastic step on his homeward way. It was a long and mountainous road, but he was never tired of traveling it. The Sabbath came and returned, and the revival at length numbered among its conquests, this forlorn lad."

Returning to the home of his parents, he was soon hired out to a farmer; the profits of his labor being received by

his father. It was about this time he made a profession of religion, uniting with the church at Mt. Vernon, under the pastoral care, at that time, of Rev. Mr. Kingsbury.

The pastor discerning in him uncommon promise, encouraged him to obtain an education, and interested himself to procure for him the remainder of his minority, in which after much persuasion with his father and employer, he succeeded.

His attention was now strongly turned to the subject of preparation for the ministry of the gospel, and hoping to enjoy some facilities for this purpose, he took up a temporary residence at Bedford, N. H., a neighboring town where he had some connections, and where he found a kind friend in Rev. David McGregor, the former pastor, who took him by the

hand, assisted him in his studies, received him into his school and into his family, expecting in return, only such services as he could render in the intervals of study and out of school hours.

It was about this time the writer of this account, then and now pastor of the church in Bedford, N. H., became acquainted with young Bryant.

The impression he made at this period, may be best given in the following extract from a sermon delivered on receiving intelligence of his death: "It was at a religious meeting one evening, held at a private house, that I first saw him. I had heard of him, and learning he was in the room, invited him with others to offer some remarks. His personal appearance at the time, was not prepossessing, his manner was awkward and uncultivated, but there

was in what he said and did a directness and simplicity that at once made an impression, and I remember thinking at the time, if providence should spare that young man's life, he was destined for something of importance."



## CHAPTER II.

## COLLEGE.—THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

AFTER various discouragements which only served to call forth the more persevering exertion, he entered the Academy at Meriden, N. H., and at length, aided by the American Education Society, he became a member of Amherst College, where in 1836, he was graduated, having maintained a high stand for scholarship, and a still higher Christian character. From College he passed to the Theological Seminary at Andover where he pursued the usual course of study for the ministry.

“We entered the Theological Semi-

nary at Andover," writes Rev. Daniel Wight of Mass., "in the Autumn of 1837, entire strangers to each other, but occupying rooms in the same hall and entry, we soon became acquainted, and frequently walked together for our exercise. I well recollect his general appearance at that time, his modest unassuming deportment, his serious aspect, and punctual, constant attendance on every exercise connected with the Seminary. I may say, we soon became intimate, and before the close of the first year, made arrangements to become room-mates. The second year of our Seminary course, some peculiar circumstances arose which delayed this intimacy till our third year, which we spent together. I write from recollection; but think I may safely say, he

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was one of the most exemplary students of the Seminary at that time. He was not, indeed, what could be called a brilliant scholar, and yet he was one of the most studious and systematic and regular in his habits, of any in the class. Nor was he an indifferent scholar; far from it. His close application and untiring diligence and perseverance, secured for him a scholarship far above mediocrity. He was accurate and thorough in all his investigations. His very modest manner did not help him to show off in the recitation room; but still he would never *fail*, and his exposition of the sacred text would usually be accurate, and often strikingly appropriate and forcible. He not only pursued with diligence the sacred studies of the regular course, but made Homer also and other

classics a part of his daily research, thus enriching his mind and laying a broader foundation for future usefulness. He was critically exact and concise in his style, if not in other respects more elegant and beautiful. His great aim in composition seemed to be usefulness; the presentation of the most weighty truth in the most simple but forcible manner. In his public exercises, he was distinct in his utterance, and solemn though not prepossessing in his manner, demanding however the attention and general approbation of all who heard him.

As a Christian, he was devotedly pious, active, consistent and faithful in all his walk. During the latter, and I think the *greater*, part of his connection with the Seminary, he not only had

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a regular class in the Village Sabbath school, but a religious meeting as a third service, in an adjoining town, some miles distant, where he also had a Bible class in connection with the meeting. In these exercises he was very constant and punctual, and made special preparation to render them as instructive and useful as possible. He seldom spoke of these exercises to others, not even to his room-mate often; but his services and constant attendance upon them spoke the language of an humble, devoted spirit. He evidently felt a deep interest in them, as also in all his studies, and every exercise and duty connected with his beloved Seminary. He would carefully avoid every relaxation or amusement of a doubtful character, abstaining as far as possible even

from the appearance of evil. Yet he was cheerful and happy in all his intercourse with his fellow-students. He was, however, more inclined to be reserved than excessive in conversation. His character as a man of piety and Christian virtue was above suspicion, and he was universally respected and beloved by his classmates, and by all who knew his true worth.

Near thirteen years have now elapsed since we joined our voices in the parting hymn,—

“Beautiful upon the mountains  
Are the messengers of peace,”

and many interesting particulars have passed from my mind; but the general impression of his heavenly life and spirit

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remains fixed in my imagination, and I would desire it more deeply graven in my heart—for I am sensible few lived in nearer communion with Christ and divine things, than that beloved classmate. I might follow him from the Seminary to his field of labor in Littleton, where I attempted to supply his place for a few weeks on the eve of his settlement—and thence to his mission in Africa—as we continued an occasional correspondence to the last; but you will find others doubtless better able to give particulars in respect to his short, but most useful career both as a pastor and missionary.

I held the most intimate intercourse with him during the three years of our Seminary course, and occasionally saw him afterward, but never was there a

word or an act of his, to my recollection, which gave the least occasion for a moment, for unpleasant feeling, or which was adapted to weaken my entire confidence in his moral and Christian character.

His memory is still very precious to me, and his excellent example, habits, and spirit, have doubtless had no small influence upon my own very imperfect life and character.

Such a character and such a life of usefulness, however short, are most happily adapted to encourage and comfort his surviving relatives and friends, and should especially excite to renewed diligence and self-denial and usefulness, all his surviving classmates, and ministerial acquaintances.

To all such, his admonition is, "Breth-



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ren be faithful—for the work is great, but the time is short.”

I have given at length, this communication, from his friend and associate at the Seminary, being so well fitted to present a faithful view of Mr. B's character and standing during the time embraced in the letter.

## CHAPTER III.

## SETTLEMENT IN THE MINISTRY.

AFTER leaving the Seminary, he soon accepted a call to settle as pastor of the Orthodox church in Littleton, Mass., where he was ordained, Oct. 28th, 1840. The Sermon on the occasion being delivered by Rev. Silas Aiken, D. D., then of Boston, now of Rutland, Vt.

About this time he was united in marriage to Miss Dolly F. Bursiel, of Bedford, N. H., who still survives.

The labors of Mr. B. at Littleton were interesting and successful, with nothing to mark his connection with that people, differing from the ordinary

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course of ministerial life. He was beloved by his flock as a faithful and affectionate pastor, and by the neighboring ministers as a fellow-laborer in the Lord. For several years he pursued the simple, unostentatious duties of a country minister, plain and unassuming in his manner, happy in the affections of his people, and with the prospect of a long-continued and useful ministry among them.

“The people of the adjoining parishes,” says a writer in the “Journal of Missions,” “loved to see him in the sacred desk. It was expected, when he had a part to perform on a public occasion, or before his brethren in private, that it would be well worth the hearing. Withal he was a holy man. He abounded in prayer, and in the study .

of the word of God, and was in the daily habit of reading portions of it in the original languages.

“If once irascible, grace had gained the victory, and he had become singularly mild and gentle. One mark of perfection was possessed by him, too seldom aimed after, and still less seldom attained,—he bridled well his tongue. Those who were most intimate with him, did not hear from his lips what was to the disparagement of the absent. It is not strange that his brethren were strongly attached to him. If he made friends more slowly than some, yet once made, they were not lost. He possessed the entire confidence and the warm affections of his whole people, and they had his in return. God had blessed his labors among them, and he was willing to spend and be spent for their good.”

His views of the work of the ministry are given in a letter written about this time to his brother George, who had requested his advice, and who is now a useful minister in the Methodist connection.

As the thoughts may be useful to young men who are agitating the subject, the following extract is inserted:—

“I will propose to you a few questions, which may, perhaps, aid you in forming a correct decision of the question, what you ought to do, relative to pursuing a course of study for the gospel ministry.

“1. Are you a decided Christian? I put this inquiry *first*, because the most important. If you are not a Christian, you are not fit to be a minister; and unless you find satisfactory evidence

that you are born of God, you ought not for one moment to think of entering the ministry.

“2. Have you the necessary talent? The work of the ministry is a great work, and demands not only devoted piety but a sound mind. People have no idea of the mental labor requisite to prepare two good sermons a week. A minister can say something without much labor, but no man can sustain himself and do justice to his people without good natural talents and a thorough education.

“A bishop, or minister, must not be a novice, an ignorant, self-conceited man, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ‘The priest’s lips should keep knowledge.’

“3. Could you probably do more good

in the ministry, than in some other employment? There are now in the ministry a great many men who seem to be mere cyphers. They either want piety, or education, or energy, or symmetry of character, or something else, that disqualifies them for the work. They seem to have mistaken their calling. True, this is no reason why others should not enter the ministry; but it is a reason why all who think of doing it should examine beforehand whether they have such talents, and such a taste as will enable them to magnify their office.

“I have often heard it said, ‘’Tis a pity to spoil a good deacon for the sake of making a poor minister,’ and I think so myself. I think that some intelligent laymen are far more useful than some shiftless, lazy ministers. It

requires more wisdom than a young man can always possess, to determine for what particular employment his taste and talents qualify him. If you can answer these questions in the affirmative, then it would seem that you ought to commence study for the ministry."



## CHAPTER IV.

## DETERMINATION TO GO ON A FOREIGN MISSION.

It was in the latter part of 1845 that his attention began to be turned to the subject of giving himself to the work of a missionary among the heathen. It had been originally his design if God so ordered, to spend his life among the heathen; but having become the minister of an attached people, he had for the most part dismissed these feelings, when by conversation on the subject, in connection with the improvement of his health and other concurring events, and more than all, the Spirit of God, these feelings were revived with great

force. He began seriously to think of going on some foreign mission.

The cry of a perishing world, and the example and dying command of his great Master in heaven, called him to break away from the endearing ties that bound him to his people, his friends, and his native land, and to go he knew not whither. As for himself, there was no want of readiness to yield a cheerful compliance, and he soon said to the Board, "If you think best for me to go—here I am, send me." His brethren whose advice was sought in council, much as they prized his fellowship, would do nothing to hold him back. What were his own feelings at this time appeared from the following in a letter to a near friend: "Be assured it is not without much anxiety and prayer that I have inquired what

is the path of duty. If I know my own heart, I want to know the will of God and do it. I don't know whether our neighboring ministers and the Board will think best to have us go. We are willing, I believe, to stay in Littleton or to go to the heathen—just as the Providence of God may seem to decide.”

Being accepted by the Board, he communicated his new purpose to his beloved people, stating the considerations by which he was led to this decision. He thus commenced the unexpected communication:—

“BELOVED FRIENDS,—Believing as I do, that the religion of the gospel requires much self-denial on the part of its professors, it has afforded me great satisfaction to see with what cheerfulness you have borne a portion of the sacri-

fices necessary to sustain the institutions of the gospel here, and also to send the same gospel to those who are destitute. You have freely given your sympathies, your prayers, your pecuniary contributions, but have you done all you can do, and all you should do, to hasten forward the conversion of the world? In behalf of the millions who are perishing in the darkness of heathenism, I ask will you do one thing more; will you give your pastor to the cause of foreign missions?"

In this paper, there is a passage of general interest bearing on the relation of pastors of churches to the subject of foreign missions.

"When I was in the Theological Seminary, the question came up for consideration, 'Ought I to go on a for-

cign mission?' Various obstacles then stood in the way, rendering it wholly impracticable for me to go, and the question was settled in the negative, as I supposed for ever. But times have since changed—obstacles have been removed. New fields of labor have been opened in heathen lands, and the call for additional laborers is now more loud and urgent than ever. In this state of things, the subject of foreign missions has again crowded itself on my attention. As a minister of Jesus Christ, I dare not refuse to inquire, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' and having learned what is the path of duty, I dare not assume the awful responsibility of refusing to walk in it. I love my books, my studies, the people of my charge, and the ministers with whom I am pleasantly associated; and were I to

consult with flesh and blood, I should certainly stay where I am; but conscience says go, and God, unless I misunderstand the leadings of his Spirit and Providences, is now calling me to a distant field of labor."

From a paragraph at the close of this communication, it appears that he was somewhat influenced in his decision by a bronchial difficulty, which had once in the course of his ministry laid him by, and which he hoped would be alleviated by a milder climate.

He now gave himself up with all his heart to the new prospects that were opening before him.

From the time he made up his mind, he seemed to be animated by a new impulse in the cause of Christ. His countenance beamed with unwonted ardor, his sermons were bathed with a

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new spirit, and he appeared, in the language of one of the Secretaries of the Board, to be reconverted, such was the warm and tender earnestness of all his movements.

“I was dismissed last Friday,” he writes to the friend to whom he was much attached, “and last Sabbath afternoon preached my farewell sermon. I got through with the sad business better than I expected. In the forenoon, Dr. Anderson, Secretary of A. B. C. F. M., preached, and in the evening gave a very interesting account of the South African mission. Our house was well filled, many Unitarians in, and all, so far as I can learn, much interested and pleased. Our people seem to love us the more, as the time draws near when we are to leave them.”

About this time he preached in

Bedford, N. H. It was a missionary sermon, and none who heard it, will forget the spirit of self-consecration, both in matter and manner, that pervaded all the exercises of that day. The pastor on recurring to the record of this Sabbath, finds the following memorandum made at the time.

*March 25, 1846.* "The course of Mr. B., who preached last Sabbath, is very interesting. A poor boy, from an obscure family among the hills, he had every disadvantage to encounter. A minister interested himself for him, and with difficulty prevailed on his father to give him his time. We then first became acquainted with him—uncultivated and uncouth. By the help of some friends he began to study, and manifested more than ordinary mind. By unwearied exertion, he became fitted



for College, entered at Amherst, where he pursued the usual collegiate course, then after an interval of school-keeping, he entered at Andover, where he pursued his Theological studies successfully, keeping school at intervals. After a season, he married a young lady of this town, was settled at Littleton, and is now with his wife, destined on a foreign mission to South Africa. A remarkable instance of successful perseverance amid opposing obstacles."

## CHAPTER V.

## EMBARKATION AND ARRIVAL.

MR. B. and wife embarked at Boston in the William H. Shailer. He kept a journal of the voyage, from which an extract or two may interest the reader.

“*April 15th*, 1846. Prayer was offered on board the bark William H. Shailer, by Rev. Mr. Langworthy, of Chelsea, at 11 A. M., and as soon as practicable, the vessel was got under way, and left the wharf. There was a good breeze blowing, and in a short time we were out of Massachusetts bay, on the broad blue sea. We soon began to feel sea-sick, but spent most of the afternoon on deck, until the increasing

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cold compelled us to go below. Between sunset and dark I went on deck again, we were just passing the sandy point of Cape Cod, leaving it a few miles on the right. I gazed for a few minutes on the receding shore, and then went below, bidding adieu to my native land forever."

"*Sabbath morning.* The weather is very calm and pleasant; how different this Sabbath from the last, which I spent among Christian friends in Littleton and Westford. I was not able to preach, and the captain called the crew in the afternoon, and held a Bible Class. I was able to be in, though somewhat sea-sick. The service was commenced by reading a chapter, each one reading in rotation. Most of the crew were foreigners, and very poor readers, and this plan is adopted to teach them.

That beautiful hymn was then read and sung;—

“Jesus, and shall it ever be,  
A mortal man ashamed of thee?”

The second mate took the lead in singing, and struck up that familiar tune, Hamburg.”

“*June 16th, Monday.* This morning about 9 o’clock, we discovered land, the first we have seen for 61 days. It was two little hills, twenty-five miles south of Cape Town, and on the south point of the Cape of Good Hope. There were many higher hills along the coast; but we could not see them. About 3 o’clock, P. M., we entered Taver bay. The scenery as we approached the land was very bold, abrupt, and magnificent, surpassing any thing I have ever seen. At half past 3 o’clock we anchored in

Taver bay, half a mile from Cape Town.”

“ *June 26th. Port Elizabeth.* We expect in two or three weeks to reach the place of our destination. A kind providence has hitherto watched over us, and to the same protection we cheerfully commend ourselves for the future. God is just as near us in Africa, as in America, and if we shall lay our bones here, heaven is just as near as from our own beloved New England. We shall probably see our friends no more on earth; but we look forward with fond anticipations, in hope of a happy reünion in heaven. O, that all who read these lines, may put to their own heart the question, ‘Am I prepared for heaven? Have I a good hope of future happiness, should death this moment summon me to the bar of God?’ ”

From Port Elizabeth, South Africa, he wrote a letter to the church and congregation at Littleton.

*“July 15th, 1846.*

“To the Orthodox church and congregation in Littleton, Mass.—

“MY BELOVED FRIENDS,—Three months have passed since we separated from each other, and I now find myself a stranger in a strange land, 8000 miles from my New England home; but be assured, neither time nor distance has diminished my affection for the people of my former charge. Never while memory performs her office, shall I forget you, and the many pleasant seasons spent among you. Never shall I cease to love you, and pray for your peace. I have many friends in America whom I love, and whom I should like to see;

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but it is with peculiar affection that my thoughts revert to Littleton, to the beloved church, to the Sabbath school, to the Saturday evening prayer-meeting, to the whole scene of my former labors and enjoyments. It is always with mingled pleasure and pain that I take such a view; pleasure that our mutual love continued for so long a time, with so little interruption; pain, that I was not more holy, more devoted to my work, and more worthy of your confidence and love. But the past cannot be recalled. Let us try to live in future, so as to have nothing to regret in a dying day, when we come to review the journey of life; and if we shall meet no more on earth, may we be so happy as to renew and perpetuate our friendship in a brighter world, where parting and sorrow are forever unknown."

Mr. and Mrs. Bryant arrived at Port Natal, August 15, 1846, and on the same day proceeded to Umlazi, the station occupied by Dr. Adams. It may here be remarked, to give a correct idea of this field of missionary labor, that this mission in South Africa was designed for two tribes occupying a country extending about 1200 miles N. E. of the Cape of Good Hope.

The first American Missionaries arrived at Port Natal, Dec. 22d, 1835, and for some years the mission was much endangered, and almost defeated by wars between the Zulus and the Dutch; and between hostile tribes of the country. At the time of Mr. B's arrival, there were five stations, with the following names: Umvoti, Umsunduzi, Ifafa, Umlazi, and Ifumi.

The state of things at the time of



his arrival, may be judged of from his first impressions, as he thus gives them in his letter to the Board.

It was Saturday night when he reached Umlazi, and the first day he spent on missionary ground, was the Christian Sabbath.

“The Sabbath morning was as beautiful and quiet as any that ever dawned on New England. Soon after breakfast, the natives were seen coming from various directions to attend the Sabbath schools; their dark forms moving in silent procession, one after another, over the neighboring hills and valleys toward the sanctuary. They first assembled in the school-room, which is under the same roof with Dr. Adams’ house. There many of the females who had come almost naked, clothed themselves in plain calico dresses, which are kept

hanging up in the school-room for that purpose; and which at the close of public worship, are again put off, and suspended in the proper place. About 200 assembled, and were taught, a few from the English Testament, but most of them from the Zulu books, which have been prepared and printed by the missionaries. In about three-quarters of an hour, more had assembled than the school-room would hold, and they all repaired to the chapel, where Dr. Adams spent some time in catechising them, and hearing them repeat the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments. A few minutes were then allowed for recess, after which public service commenced.

Dr. Adams' chapel will hold about 600 persons. It was filled, and some stood around on the outside, who could

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not gain admission. Some were clothed very decently. Some had only a shirt or pantaloons, a few were dressed in the cast-off garments of soldiers, and others were nearly naked. A portion of the men brought along their assagais and war clubs, which they left outside of the chapel door. This was almost our first view of the natives, and a singular group they were, six hundred of them thus appareled, and crowded together in one long and narrow chapel."

He then describes their deportment during public worship, which was orderly and devout.

After spending a short time with Dr. Adams at Umlazi, Mr. B. repaired to his station at Huorie, situated seven miles distant from the sea.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MISSIONARY LIFE.

MR. B. having been distinguished for his talent as a linguist, was successful in his efforts to learn the Zulu language, to which he applied himself with great assiduity. The following cursory remarks on the language, in a letter, will give some idea of a few of its peculiarities. It is to a young friend:—

“Only a very few of the natives have as yet learned to speak English. All our intercourse with this people is conducted in their language. The language of this people is smooth and musical, and easier to be learned than the Eng-

lish. But they have not near as many words in their language as we have in ours, and hence I sometimes find a difficulty in talking and preaching. In many cases we take the English word and give it a Zulu form, which makes the word look and sound oddly. Before white men came here, the natives had never seen a stove, a saddle, or a cat, and of course, they had no name for these objects. But they call a stove, *isitova*; a saddle, *isadali*, and a cat, *ikati*. There is no *r* in their language, and but very few of the natives can pronounce that letter; they generally give it the sound of *e* or of *w*. They find it almost impossible to pronounce a word unless it ends with a vowel. They find my name a very hard one to speak, for it contains an *r*, and does not end with a vowel. When they

speak my name at all, they generally call it Ubilanti, or something very near it. Mr. Grout they call Ugalooti. Every name in the language must also have a prefix before it, or the natives cannot pronounce it. I have not yet fully learned the language, but have learned so much that I am able to converse with the people, and preach, and pray in the language without much difficulty. In the morning we have family prayers in English. In the evening I read and pray in the Zulu language, for the benefit of four children who are now living in our family, and whom we are trying to instruct both in reading and in work."

Mr. B. during his brief term of service, experienced some of the trials incident to missionary life. The following from another letter, may be given as a

specimen of some of the hindrances and interruptions to which our foreign missionaries are exposed:—

“Every day brings its cares and labors, and I generally find at the close of each day, that I have not been able to accomplish all that I intended in the morning.

In the morning I think, Well, I must write a letter to day, and study on the language at least three hours. I seat myself to write, and presently a man comes with a dreadful toothache, and I must leave my letter and extract the tooth. I seat myself again, and presently a girl comes with a basket of green corn, which she wants to sell; after dismissing her, I resume my pen, and presently another girl comes with a pumpkin on her head, and then a boy comes for medicines for his brother,

who had been bitten by a snake, or accidentally pierced by an assagai; and then two or three travelers call at the door, who want nothing, only to pay their respects, and have a little chat. Thus my time is broken up into small fragments, and passes away without my accomplishing as much writing and study as I could desire.

“Twice I was thus interrupted in this letter, before I had written five lines, and I am every moment expecting other calls. Mrs. Bryant affords me great assistance, by attending to many of the people that call; but many persons usually come every day, on whom I am obliged to wait in person. We have not yet been in a situation to have a garden of our own; we have to purchase our corn, pumpkins, potatoes, &c., of the natives. Do not under-



stand me as complaining of these interruptions. We came here for the good of this people, and God sends them to our door that we may become acquainted with them, may learn their language and habits, and especially that we may speak to them a word of instruction and admonition. 'These interruptions sometimes hinder some of our plans, but God's plan is better than ours, and he is giving us by these interruptions the means of doing more extensive good.'

The following incident may not be uninteresting to the reader, as showing the darkness of heathenism, and illustrating in this instance, the solemn providence of God:—

“A sad disaster occurred at the Umvoti station a few weeks ago. The natives had appointed a dance at a

Krael, opposite the mission station, on the other side of the river. Their dances are most grossly corrupt, and licentious. Men and boys, and unmarried females go on purpose to engage in practices which decency will not allow me to mention. Two girls living near the mission station determined to go to the dance, though Mr. Grout had plainly told them the sinfulness of such conduct, and advised them not to go. They went, and in fording the river to get there, one of them gave a loud, piercing shriek, and then disappeared beneath the water. The other girl crossed in safety, and engaged in the dance, but said nothing about her companion till morning. Search was made, but the girl was not then found. She was, however, seen by others, floating down the stream, the flesh nearly all

eaten from her bones by alligators. One of these animals had seized her in the water; she uttered one shriek and then disappeared. What a commentary on Prov. 29: 1: 'He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' "

After being a short time in the country, his health began seriously to fail. He had been subject to a difficulty or weakness at the lungs, which it was hoped a change of climate might alleviate or remove, a hope to which physicians gave encouragement. But the hardships and exposure incident to the commencement of a mission among a rude people, were more than his constitution could endure, and tended probably to hasten that fatal event, which it was hoped the genial influence of a warm latitude would avert or postpone.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FAILURE OF HIS HEALTH.

HE then adverts to the uncertainty of his future prospects in a letter to a friend:—

*“ Ifumi, S. Africa, Sept. 27th, 1848.*

“ I should like to tell you a great deal more, but my letter is already long, and it has taken me nearly a day and a half to write it. It would be exceedingly pleasant to me to see my dear American friends once more, to talk over with them the condition and prospects of this people, and tell of all the lights and shades that add variety to our path.

“ But there is no prospect that we shall meet again on earth, and it will

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be bliss enough if we shall be so happy as to meet in heaven. We shall then have long stories to tell, and time enough in which to tell them. So far as this world is concerned, my prospects are all uncertain. I may live for several years,—the thing is not impossible; but if I continue to fail as I have done for some months, I can hardly expect to stand it one year longer. I can now do but little, save wait the issue of my disease. I cheerfully leave all the future in the hands of my heavenly Father. I see no reason to regret that we came to Africa. I bless God that my steps were directed here, to labor, though for a short time, and then lie down and die. I have learned many a valuable lesson that I never could have learned in America. I have seen the darkness and degradation, the woes of heathenism, and the value of

that gospel which has raised the people of New England to such an exalted position."

To the same purport he wrote to the compiler of this memoir:—

*"Ifumi, S. Africa, Dec. 12, 1847.*

"I have but little that is interesting to communicate. A subject of some interest to me at the present time, is the state of my health. For eleven months past I have constantly had a cough. About two months ago, I had to ford a river, which was so swollen by a recent rain, that the horse was obliged to swim. I got some wet, and was obliged to ride in my wet garments all the afternoon. From that time my cough has been more severe than formerly, and on the 13th of November, I had an attack of bleeding at the lungs. Last week Dr. Adams examined

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my lungs, by auscultation, and gave it as his opinion, that there are tubercles formed in both lobes, particularly in the right. He says it is possible that the tubercles may lie in a dormant state, and not trouble me for several years; or a severe cold may at any time excite them into activity, and carry me off by a consumption.

“I have not been able to preach since I bled at the lungs, and do not expect to preach again for some time, if I ever do. As I am now on the ground, and have so far acquired the language as to speak in it, I should prefer, (if such be the will of God,) to live several years longer, and preach the gospel to this people; but whatever be the issue of my illness, I think I feel resigned to the will of Him who knows what is best, and who doeth all things well.”

It may seem mysterious to human view, that after the expense of education, and after preparation for laboring among the heathen, the missionary should be laid aside from the work on which he had just entered. Why, the inquiry may be, should the missionary who goes to a distant clime, who becomes accustomed to the habits of the heathen by whom he is surrounded, who has acquired their language, so as to be able to preach to them understandingly, why should he be taken from scenes of usefulness on which he has just entered?

Surely, it may be thought, *such an one* will be spared; surely *he* will not be taken from a field in which he has just begun to reap.

The solution of the whole may be found in that passage: "But we have



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this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." God will have the glory. He can answer great purposes by the death, as well as by the life of his servant.

"He moves in a mysterious way,  
His judgments to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm."

But the effects of B's brief labors were not transient. His life was short, but his work will remain. One of his brethren thus speaks of him:—

"As a linguist he excelled. For many years and even to the last, he made the Bible in the original a daily study. And from the first of his access to the Zulu language, he gave himself to the acquisition of it, with the zeal of a martyr, and probably to the detriment

of his health. And his attainments in this tongue would be regarded as by no means moderate; especially, if we consider the state of his health, the time he was spared to pursue it, and the great difficulties with which the study of it is beset. Still, he was far from regarding himself a master of the language; and he believed that much observation and study, analysis and generalization would be necessary for a full understanding, and statement of its facts and principles.

“He prepared an elementary Arithmetic in Zulu, and a religious tract on the evidences of regeneration. He also wrote several hymns, with several articles for a monthly paper, and translated a fourth part of the Psalms, besides criticising the portions assigned to others. He had begun a translation of the Acts of the

Apostles, when his wasting strength failed, and God called him to converse face to face with those blessed spirits whose writings and lives he had so thoroughly studied."

Early in 1850, his health entirely failed, and he was unable to sit up all the time. The station he had commenced at Ifumi, he was obliged to relinquish, and in April, made a formal communication to the brethren on the subject.

In their reply they say, "We would gladly for many years yet to come, enjoy your sympathy, your counsel, and your aid. But if God has another and a nobler service for you, we will not wish to stay you, whenever our heavenly Father shall call."

A beloved member of the mission, who had peculiar advantages of becom-

ing acquainted with our lamented brother, and in whose family he spent much of the last year of his life, thus writes to the Secretary of the Board:—

“In conversation with him, about a month before his death, he said, ‘The Saviour was never so precious to me as he is now. There were, a short time ago, several days when I did not enjoy the light of his countenance. Sin appeared to me as it never had appeared before. It seemed more hateful, more odious, than ever in my life before. I had new convictions of the depravity of the heart, especially of my own heart. But now I enjoy much of the presence and blessing of God. I have sweet peace, and that without interruption. I think I feel completely resigned, and ready to go home, just when God shall please to call me.’

“He thanked God for doing so much for him, especially for granting him so much peace, and freedom from pain, that he might be a witness to the natives, of the Saviour’s love in the hour of weakness, and approaching death. ‘The work,’ said he, ‘in which I have been engaged, I regard as a most blessed work; and I hope that you and all the brethren may be spared long to prosecute it. O, blessed privilege! to labor for the poor benighted Africans, and be the means of their salvation! But my career is nearly ended, unless it shall be the pleasure of God that I still serve and glorify him by patient suffering.’ ”

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HIS DEATH.

ABOUT this time he removed to the station at Ifafa, and spent his last days in the family of Mr. Lindley. "One month before his death," Mr. Lindley says, "Mr. and Mrs. Bryant came to reside with us, and thus afforded us the privilege of seeing and hearing him in his last days.

"Through all his sickness, Mr. Bryant was comparatively free from bodily pain, and with the exception of a brief period, he was filled 'with all joy and peace in believing,' and abounded 'in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.'"

A few weeks before his end, the sin-

fulness of sin was so clearly revealed to him, as to make him "abhor himself," and to fear for a moment he should be "abhorred of God." But this was only the passing of a shadow over a prospect usually serene and joyful.

Thirteen days previous to his death, he wrote to his parents, in a letter left unfinished, "I am happy to inform you, that my mind still continues calm, and comfortable. I do not feel anxious either to remain or to depart. I know that God's time is always the best, and I am willing to wait his time and his disposal. I have no merit of my own to depend on for salvation, but my hope rests entirely on the merits of Christ."

Eight days before his death, Mr. B. remarked, "God is dealing with me exactly as I could wish. The prospect is that I shall not be long confined to my

bed, and not long deprived of reason." It was even so; he was not confined to his bed for a single day. And even on the last morning of his life, he rose from his bed as usual, and sat in his chair an hour and a half.

The day before he died, the following conversation passed between him and Mrs. B: "Probably this is the last Sabbath I shall see. In all my sickness God has been very kind. Every thing has been done in the right time. It is not hard to be thankful, when we have things just as we wish,—Is it? Then looking with a smile, he said, 'Will you be as thankful to God for taking me at the right time? I hope you will not feel that there is nothing more for you to enjoy, after I am gone. You will have God to go to at all times, and I hope you will be cheerful and



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happy, and do all the good you can. You will feel very lonely; but it is better not to yield to such feelings. It is wrong to murmur at the dealings of God with us."

Mrs. B. asked, "Are you happy in your mind?"

"Yes. The Saviour is my only hope; I do and will trust in him."

"I would advise you," he said to her, "to spend much time in reading the Bible, meditation, and prayer. I have been a loser by not spending more time in private meditation."

"A few hours before his death, which was not thought to be so near," writes Mr. Lindley, "I said that another week like the past, would probably bring him to his end. He at once replied, 'God's will be done.' After a little pause, during which, he was evidently thought-

ful, he said, 'It seems almost too much to think that in a week, or a little more, I shall be with Him in heaven, and with all the noble spirits there. Heaven contains all that is desirable in this world, and a vast deal more. There is no loss of any kind in going there, it is all gain.' "

"His mind was perfectly clear to the last. He said to Mrs. Bryant, 'I think I am dying.' These were his last words. He kissed her; and this was his last act. The next moment he was unconscious of every thing around him, and without moving even a finger, he gently ceased to breathe.

"His spirit lives in heaven, and knows by glorious fruition what it is to be with 'Him, and with all the noble spirits there.' O, brother, we will praise the Lord for his goodness to thee."

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“ Mr. Bryant,” adds Mr. Lindley, “ was a member of this mission a little more than four years and four months. During this time he was ever found a humble, cheerful, conscientious Christian, and a laborious missionary. When he became unable to speak in public, he took up his pen; and in the way of original composition he did much to advance the cause in which he was engaged. He worked almost to the last. He was in heart a missionary. He was an affectionate, faithful friend. We loved him, all of us; we loved him exceedingly; and had it been possible for others to bear the pain of his sickness, we all should have wished to endure a part. At our next meeting when he shall be spoken of, we shall weep together as good brothers of the same family weep together for the loss of the

best brother they had, and why not? He never spoke to us, or thought of us, otherwise than in love.

“Just a week before his death, he was found weeping. Mrs. Bryant asked him why he wept? He answered, ‘I was thinking of the brethren, and how happy we have always been together in all our meetings; and also of you, that probably by next Monday you will be a widow.’ On the Monday which he named, he left his wife a widow, and his brethren to mourn his loss. These, it is believed were the last tears he shed, they were tears of affection. The day on which he died, he said, ‘Give them my love.’ This was his last message to his fellow laborers.”

The circumstances of his death were remarkably ordered in accordance with his desires. “During his sickness,” we

again use the language of the missionary just quoted, "Mr. Bryant expressed a wish, several times, that he might glorify God in his death. This wish was granted in a way which no one had anticipated. Your first missionaries to this country arrived here, Dec. 22d, 1835. The members of our several churches now hold an anniversary on this day, to commemorate, by appropriate religious exercises, the time when light first began to dawn on this darkness. By previous appointment, this meeting was held this year at Ifafa. Some seventy of our church members were here on the occasion, and at the time of Mr. B's death. The most of them saw him while expiring; and they saw too how cheerfully a good man can die. They had seen gloomy, dejected heathen die in sullen silence, but had

never before witnessed the decease of a joyful Christian. It will do them good. They felt and said that they had lost a friend. Some of them helped to shroud him; and then they all went in a body and dug his grave."

## CHAPTER IX.

## CHARACTER.—PREACHING.

“MR. BRYANT possessed a cultivated, active and well-balanced mind. His knowledge of men, of books, of countries, &c., was not confined to narrow limits, and it was always available. He was able to make valuable and interesting remarks on such scientific, literary, religious and practical subjects as might become the theme of conversation in intelligent and refined society. But his good taste and humility kept him from the least semblance of display, and from every thing like a desire to obtrude his opinions out of time or place.

“But though modest and retiring, no man was less afraid of men in the discharge of duty; no one more willing to tell them their faults; no one able to do it with more kindness, with better motives, or with better acceptance.”

As a preacher, Mr. Bryant was acceptable wherever he preached. His composition was distinguished for simplicity and directness; and though a good classical scholar, and familiar with Latin and Greek authors, his style was plain Saxon English. His communications, as a missionary, to the columns of the “Farmer’s Cabinet,” Amherst, N. H., and of the “Congregational Journal,” Concord, N. H., are creditable to his pen; as also are all he prepared for the “Missionary Herald.”

His sermons were of a high order, as appear from some specimens left in



manuscript. They are such as would bear the criticism of the most cultivated audience, and at the same time commend themselves to the conscience and the heart.

The following is the close of one he delivered to his people in Littleton, in the ordinary course of his public ministrations. The text is Jer. 3: 20. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

"Finally,—Aged sinners are in a condition fearfully dangerous, and alarming. They have spent in sin the best part of their life, the spring of their youth, the summer and autumn of their manhood, and have come to the winter of old age, having made no preparation for approaching death. Old age has whitened their heads, and ploughed deep furrows on their cheeks, and bending under a

load of infirmities, they totter along on the borders of the grave, for which they have made no preparation. Eternity is but just before them, and only a short interval separates them from the unending retributions of heaven or hell; time has been wasted and lost, opportunities once enjoyed have now vanished away; conscience has been seared, and the heart hardened by sin. Sinful habits have been formed, which are now more stubborn than ever, and more clamorous for indulgence. And under all these disadvantages the aged sinner is now called upon to consider his ways and turn to God. To break up now the fallow ground of his heart, to repent of sins, and submit to God; this seems like trying to raise vegetation amid the frosts and snows of winter. Multitudes who have passed their three-score years

and ten, are in precisely this condition, and yet how seldom do we hear of one of them converted to God. The Spirit comes down in time of revival, and multitudes of the young are converted; but how seldom is one old, gray-headed sinner, brought to rejoice in the pardoning mercy of God. They resemble a tree that has been scorched and blasted by the lightning of heaven. From root to branch it is dead, and the winds whistle mournfully through its leafless branches. Vernal suns shine down to warm it,—summer showers fall to water and refresh it, but all does no good. There the tree stands year after year, producing neither blossoms, leaves nor fruit. So with the aged sinner. God's judgments and mercies fall upon him in rapid succession, but neither judgments nor mercies can quicken him

into spiritual life. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and he has brought forth no fruit; and now when the winter of age has come, there is very little prospect indeed that he will ever bring forth fruit to the glory of God. Who would wish to be such a careless, hardened, impenitent sinner? Who would wish to tremble over the grave, burdened with the sins of seventy years, and having no hope in the pardoning mercy of God? O, who would willingly stand on the confines of time, and reflect that he must soon launch forth on the shoreless and fathomless ocean of eternity without any preparation?

Sinner, would you avoid such a fearful condition? Repent of sin, and fly at once to the cross of Christ, and your old age will be peaceful and happy. But neglect religion, as you are

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now doing, and you will one day take up the sad lamentation of the text: 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'

Another extract is given from a sermon on the text, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."—1 John 3: 8.

"To the Christian this subject is full of consolation and encouragement. The cause of religion is safe, and will eventually triumph. Obstacles to the success of the truth there may be, and no doubt there will be, as there have been in ages past. Times of reaction there may be when the truth will seem to lose ground, and error gain a temporary advantage. Iniquity may abound, and the love of many wax cold. Some may apostatize from the faith, grieve the

hearts of God's people, and harden sinners in sin. Individual churches may sometimes diminish, and dwindle down and die, but the cause of religion will still move onward,—right onward to the glorious accomplishment predicted in the word of God. The gospel will be preached to all nations; the heathen converted, and the glory of God yet cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

To you, my Christian friends, is given the privilege of laboring in this cause, under Jesus the Captain of your salvation. He does not need your services, but he kindly invites you to share with him in the toils of the warfare, and the glory of the victory. And where is the Christian, rescued from the thralldom of Satan, and purified in the blood of the Lamb, whose heart does not burn to take part in this glorious enterprise of

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destroying the works of the devil, and of establishing all over the globe, the unbroken supremacy of Jesus Christ. If there be one who desires to be excused, let him stand aside; he may be excused from all the toils and labors of the present conflict, and from all the glories too of the coming victory. If we labor for Christ heartily and faithfully, even though unsuccessfully, we shall not lose our reward; but if we slothfully fold our hands and refuse to labor, he will raise up other helpers to do our work, and enjoy the reward. One grand rule of his administration is, "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him,—if we deny him, he will also deny us."

## CHAPTER X.

## CONCLUSION.

THE history of Bryant illustrates the importance of singleness of purpose in the pursuit of some worthy object. He turned neither to the right hand nor the left. He had formed his purpose, and to that every thing else was subservient. And what was the purpose? It was to serve God. It was to promote his cause. It was to be instrumental in saving his fellow men. It was to be a preacher of righteousness. We cannot too highly estimate the importance of setting out in life, with one great object,—one commanding purpose. It is necessary in order to secure success. It is essential



to eminent usefulness. It is by no means indispensable to be a minister in order to serve God, or to be a missionary in order to promote his cause; but it is indispensable to resolve that whatever be our profession or calling, we will make the house of God, and the good of man the one great object for which we live. Such a resolve carried out, will do wonders. Such a resolution, become active, will accomplish much in a little time. Whatever object we are devoted to, if we aim at it with singleness of purpose, and untiring aim, we shall attain it.

Is there not something sublimely interesting, in seeing a man singly devoted to one great object, making that object the aim for which he lives?

Lafayette consecrated himself to one object. He gave himself up to one great

end, the freedom of his race. He saw liberty written on the firmament of God, and the vision filled his youthful heart. He never lost sight of it. He exiled himself from home, and surrendered all his titled honors. He left stars and garters, and coronets, and came to this struggling people; he returned back and was imprisoned for years in a gloomy dungeon,—but the beautiful vision was still before him, and he was permitted, in some degree, to realize it before he died.

Samuel J. Mills said, when a young man, “I have but one life to live. I am resolved, that before I die, my influence shall be felt on the other side of the globe.” He kept in view one great object. He went to Africa, his life was short, but his object was accomplished.

Such too was the spirit of Judson,

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whose memoir seems to form a new era in missionary literature. His course illustrates the remark, "The intense concentration of thought, feeling, purpose, energy, upon a large and worthy object, in the one adopted sphere which is implied in this doing one thing, is one of the sublimest of spectacles."

Jesus Christ devoted himself exclusively to the cause of human salvation. It occupied his thoughts from the first, to the last moment of his continuance on earth. He might have been preëminent in any of the walks of worldly renown. With a single sentence he could have flashed light on the darkest mysteries of philosophy, but he would not thus debase his mission, he would not spare a single moment from teaching that higher science, the knowledge of salvation.

Bryant was distinguished for this singleness of purpose. It was this kept him up, and pressed him onward, amid great discouragements. Perhaps few young men have had greater. His youth was obscure, unknown, destitute; but he made his way through every obstacle. He pursued a course of successful perseverance. Friends came to his aid. Encouragement dawned upon him. Why was he so persevering? It was because under God, he had placed his eye on one great object. This filled the sphere of his vision. This animated him by day and by night. This whispered hope in the hour of sadness. This gave him energy to pursue an education, when he had no means. This sustained him, when he went to college, not knowing what was before him. This cheered him when he went to Andover, to pur-

sue a course of Theological study. This was present to his mind when he took the pastoral office at Littleton, and the same great and glorious object was still before him, when he determined to go and pour celestial light upon the eyeballs of the blind, among the sable children of Africa.

And when at the very time of promise and expectation, his strength was weakened by the way, did he become wavering and disheartened? Surely not. He could no longer preach, but every expedient that could be devised for the good of his people, was put in requisition. He taught a school. He took native youth into his family for instruction. He conversed with small parties who came to his house on the Sabbath. He prepared books in the native language. He seemed to abound in labors

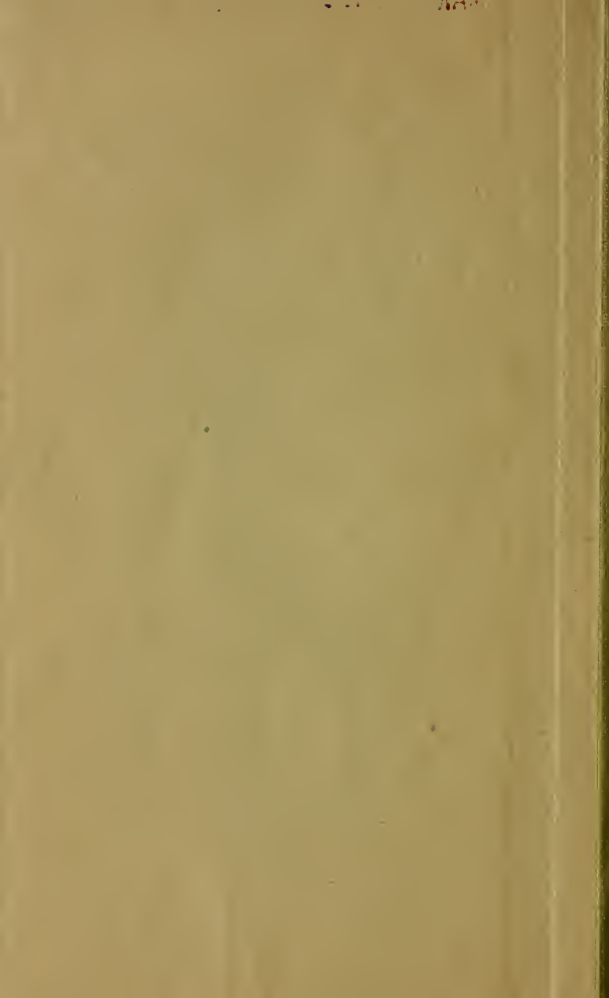
more than ever. And when at length the frail tabernacle became too much worn for any active effort, and he was spending his remaining days with one and another of his brethren, did he cease entirely from his labors? No; not till the very last. In the important and delightful work of translation, he was engaged to the close. And may we not believe, that he will be found to have rendered the Psalms into the native language, with that peculiar felicity which such an ability as he must have had of entering into their spirit, could alone secure? How precious is such a death! How sweet the savor of such a name! How hallowed the influence of such an example.











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